

A  
D E F E N C E  
O F T H E  
Scripture-History

So far as it concerns

The *RESURRECTION* of JAIKUS'S  
Daughter; the Widow of NAIN'S  
Son; and LAZARUS.

In Answer

To Mr. WOOLSTON'S Fifth Discourse  
on our *Saviour's Miracles*.

W I T H

A P R E F A C E, containing some REMARKS  
on his ANSWER to the Lord Bishop of  
*St. David's*.

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*This is the Disciple which testifieth of these things,  
and wrote these things; and we know that his  
Testimony is true. JOHN XXI. 24.*

---

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN PEMBERTON, at the *Buck*,  
against St. *Dunstan's Church*, in *Fleet-street*.

M.DCC.XXX.

(Price One Shilling.)

DECLARATION

OF THE

Scottish Whigs

The Whigs of Scotland  
Do hereby declare  
That they are not  
in any manner  
connected with  
the late Jacobite  
Rebellion

To Mr. W. Stewart  
of the Court of Session

THE WHIGS  
OF SCOTLAND  
Do hereby declare  
That they are not  
in any manner  
connected with  
the late Jacobite  
Rebellion

And they do further  
declare that they  
are not in any  
manner connected  
with the late  
Jacobite Rebellion

LOVE DONALD  
James of John Stewart  
against Sir J. Stewart

London  
(1745 or 1746)



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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**T**HE Controversy with Mr. Woolston on the Subject of our Saviour's Miracles, having been already undertaken by a very \* Eminent Hand; any Interposition from a private Writer, may look like Presumption. His Lordship, I am persuaded, will be so far from taking offence, that he will be pleased, on this occasion, to see the proper Evidences of a Concern for the common Faith, from what Quarter soever they come; and will not think it a Disparagement to his Undertaking if it be presumed, that Performances of a great deal less account than his own, may have their use. Mr. W. has in all his late Writings shewn a great Contempt of the Clergy; and had this been all, it might and would have been borne with. But when the Question comes to affect the Truth of the Gospel, it is every Man's Right, and every Man's Duty, to consider his Objections, and to offer his Thoughts to the Publick, so far as he thinks himself capable of advancing any thing, which may help to set these Matters in a true and proper Light.

It is grown to be so fashionable a thing for every Writer both in Divinity and in Politicks, to assume

\* Bp. of St. David's.

to himself an unbounded Licence to write what he pleases, that I marvel not that this Gentleman, who had so many offensive things to say, should flee to the common Refuge in such Cases, and be very angry at those who should suggest, that the Magistrate has any right to interpose in such Questions as these. I will have no dispute with Mr. W. upon this Point, which lies at present before other Judges. If you will believe him in what he often says, Reason and Argument is all he wants: tho' if you will judge from what he writes, he means nothing less; of which, setting aside his ludicrous way of treating the most serious things, (which is choquing to all who do not come to the reading of his Books with the same Spirit with which he wrote them) this is sufficient Proof, that he has never yet vouchsafed a proper Answer to any one Writer who has appeared against him, nor, so far as we can judge at present, ever intends to do it. In his last Piece, which is professedly written against the Bishop of St. David's, he amuses his Readers with general Harangues, and Digressions into Subjects which have no relation to the main Controversy; but enters into no Point, nor (as he himself confesses) so much as attempts \* to defend himself on any one Miracle. Since this is the Case, the World, I suppose, will readily acquit his Lordship, if he should never think it worth his while to enter into the Particulars of it. But the Reason he gives for not defending himself is well worth notice, namely, that as he cannot do this without writing in the same Style and Strain for which he is prosecuted, so he will do nothing that may be interpreted as an Act in Defiance and Contempt of the Power of the Civil Magistrate; which is so sorry a Pretence, that, I think, even Mr. W. himself could

\* Defence, part 1. p. 51.

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not hope that it should pass with the most unwary Reader. He is prosecuted, he tells us, for the Style and Strain of his Writings, that is, I suppose, for burlesquing and ridiculing the Miracles of our Blessed Saviour. Now because, it seems, whenever he undertakes his own Defence, he cannot do it without writing in the same Style and Strain, therefore he declines it for the present, lest it should be interpreted as an Act of Defiance to Civil Authority. Who does not see here that Mr. W. prevaricates? He takes notice himself, that he published two Discourses after the Commencement of the Prosecution, which all the World knows are written in the same Style and Strain; and if any one can be so weak as to believe him in what he says in excuse for it, namely, that he thought his Prosecutors were in jest, yet, now at least, he seems convinced that they are in earnest. And yet in this very Book he writes in the same Style and Strain as before, or worse, if it were possible; and declares, that if he survives the Prosecution, and escapes with Life and Liberty, he will go on to do so, in spite of any Discouragement that our Laws can give; which plainly shews, that, not a Regard to Civil Authority is the true Reason of his declining to enter into the Defence of his Cause, but something else which was not to be spoke out. Surely Mr. W. might have thought it as safe to have answered the Bishop of St. David's, and the rest of his Opposers, if he could have done it, as to go on in abusing them; nor need he have fear'd a more heavy Sentence for offering a just and a reasonable Apology for himself, if he knew that he had a just Apology to offer. I confess there are a great many of the Opinion, that he deserves chastisement for his Ill-manners; but I hope there are very few who would have him severely



verely treated merely for his Infidelity: and under what odious Colours soever he may think fit to represent the English Clergy, I will answer for some of them, that they are not afraid to follow him to the very bottom of this Question, whenever he has any thing to offer that is fit for a Christian to hear.

It is amazing to consider with how much Confidence this Writer challenges all the World to a Dispute, in which the Whole of Religion lies at stake, whilst, at the same time, he gives the strongest Intimations possible, that he never means to enter into this Point with the Spirit and Conduct of a sober Inquirer after Truth. He tells us, that \* if our Bishops were any thing Heroical, they would stop the Prosecution, and let the Controversy take its free course. How much it may be in the power of any of our Bishops to put a stop to this Prosecution, I do not know, nor do I think it material to enquire. But why must the Prosecution be stopt? Why, if the Gentleman has any honest meaning, he must say, that there may be room for free Debate, and that the Arguments on both sides may be fairly considered. Very well. And does Mr. W. mean to undertake the part of a fair Disputant, in case this Liberty should be granted him? By no means; for you have already seen that he CANNOT write but in the same Style and Strain; and at the Close of his Book he says plainly, that † notwithstanding what the Bishop has written in Vindication of Jesus's Miracles, the literal Story of them, by the leave of God and of the Civil Magistrate, shall be afresh attack'd, and perhaps with MORE RIDICULE than he used before. Reason is one thing; Ridicule is another: So that what the Gentleman modestly

\* P. 52.

† P. 69.



wishes for is this, that the Civil Magistrate would sit by to hear, not whether Mr. W. is able to justify himself by Reason, but whether he has Wit enough to laugh Religion out of countenance. If this be the Magistrate's Province, I think he has very little to do. But Mr. W. should be put in mind, that his Cause gains no credit by trusting to such Artifices as these. Whatever his Doubts may be, there is certainly a way of proposing them to the Publick, that is consistent with Decency and good Sense; and since he, it seems, is under so unhappy a Fatality, that he CANNOT write inoffensively, he should be taught the Discretion to leave the Dispute to somebody that can. But his unwillingness to do it, can, in my apprehension, proceed from nothing else than a secret Conviction, that his Cause will not stand a fair Tryal.

If Mr. W. had been under any Inclination to do justice to the Argument he has enter'd upon, there were several Treatises previous to the Bishop of St. David's, which he would certainly have thought worth his notice. Among the rest I will take leave to mention, in the first place, The Tryal of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus; a Treatise which has gain'd an universal esteem amongst all who read with Understanding. To what hand soever it is that the Publick is obliged for this judicious Performance, he has certainly all the Qualifications of a fair Adversary. Here is no crying out to the Civil Magistrate for help: none of those Calumnys and Slanders which Mr. W. so loudly, and so unreasonably complains of. Here is Argument for him, and nothing but Argument, in which there is this Circumstance that must recommend it to Mr. W. as it does to every body else, that the Objections on the side of Infidelity are set in a much stronger Light than that Gentleman knew

*knew how to put them himself. And yet this Book, though published many Months ago, very soon after his sixth Discourse made its appearance, has lain by neglected, and not one Word of notice taken of it till now!—And what does Mr. W. say to it now? Why, that \* the Author of this Treatise is a Friend to his Objections against Jesus's Resurrection, which he has fairly stated, but is so far from fully confuting ALL of them, that he discovers a Consciousness here and there that they are unanswerable. By the way, here is a pretty plain Confession, that there are SOME of his Objections which the Author of this Treatise has fully confuted; and it would have been some Satisfaction if Mr. W. would have told us which they are, in his Opinion, that he has not fully confuted. But this is of no great consequence; because, upon the whole, he tells us, that there is very little in this Treatise to make it reputed a sufficient Answer to his Objections, excepting the Verdict of the Jury. Is it not visible to the whole World, that this Writer disdains to debate the Question fairly with any body, and means to support his Cause merely by dint of Assurance? Has he written one single Page to shew that there is any appearance of Truth in what he says? Not one. Has he so much as referr'd his Readers to the particular Passages in that Treatise, where the Author has discovered this Consciousness, that his Objections are unanswerable? Nor this, nor any thing has he said to shew, that he ever intends it. He tells us indeed of † a Vindication which he once drew up, and which he still hopes for an Opportunity to publish, at some time or other. And what is he to prove in this Vindication? Why, it seems, that Bishop Sherlock is not the Author of this Treatise.*

\* P. 59.

† P. 61.

*What is it, Sir, to you, or to your Cause, who is the Author of this Treatise? If I should prove, that Mr. W. is not the Author of the Books lately published under his Name, but that somebody wrote them for him, what am I the nearer? The Objections will be just the same, neither better nor worse. And so will the Answers to these Objections be, whether Bishop Sherlock wrote them or not. No doubt if Mr. W. could have proved the Author of this Treatise to be of his side, he would have done it long before now, as knowing that it would have been more to his purpose, than finding fault with Deductions: And in that case 'tis natural to suppose, that he would have been glad that the World should believe that Author to be Bishop Sherlock, that the greatness of his Name might add glory to his Triumphs. But he knows he falsifys, and his Cowardise betrays him. If he denys it, it will be expected that he gives a reason for it, by shewing that this Writer has not answered his Objections. Whenever he will undertake this Point, whether fairly or unfairly, somebody will be at leisure to see how well he performs it; to which Mr. W. has this Encouragement, that if he gets the better in this Debate, and can once prove the Resurrection of our Saviour to be a Cheat, no body will think it worth the while to dispute the rest with him.*

*Mr. W's Neglect of so considerable a Writer will appear so much the more deserving our notice, when 'tis remembred how he has improved the Silence of the Clergy, upon the Publication of his first Discourse, into a matter of boasting. \* I have given them (says he) time enough to make a Reply, if they had been of Ability to do it. What must I then think upon their Silence? Nothing less than that my Cause is impregnable, and my Arguments*

\* Disc. 2. p. 2.



and Authoritys in defence of it irrefragable.—  
*The World is by this time, I hope, convinced, that Mr. W. was greatly mistaken, and may be more so in due time. What I mention this for, is only to shew, that if we may be permitted to judge of Mr. W. by the same Rule that he judges of others, he stands condemned. For he has not answered this Book, nor (as it appears) ever means to answer it.*

*There is another nameless Writer mentioned by Mr. W. as a Writer of some Credit, whom,\* like a courageous Champion (as he speaks) he looks in the Face; but, like a Coward, presently turns his Back upon. It is the Author of three small Tracts, entituled, The Miracles of Jesus vindicated. This Gentleman has, in a very short and plain manner, answered Mr. W's Objections to several of our Saviour's Miracles, for which he deserves Thanks. Instead of shewing the Insufficiency of these Answers, Mr. W. is pleased to entertain his Readers with an account of some Chit-chat that his Friend the Rabbi had with him over a Dish of Tea, concerning one of these Treatises, and declares, that if he † could have gotten to the certain Knowledge of the Author, he should have been tempted to have had a Bout with him. Go on, Sir, I beseech you. What is it that hinders? If you cannot find the Man, you can find his Books, which is all you want, unless your Design is personally to affront him: And doubtless this is what Mr. W. means when he says, that if he could find him out he would teach him a better Use, and a more proper Application of the words DISHONESTY, and WANT OF HONESTY, than to reproach him with them. This Writer, you must know, has charged Mr. W. with quoting the Fathers dishonestly. If he can answer this Charge, why does he not do it? Let Shame*

\* P. 4.

† P. 57.



rest where it will, he will remove it from himself. If he cannot, he will gain no advantage from the knowledge of the Author, which will not help to make his Case worse. So that this is plainly a Shift to avoid engaging in a Point which he finds too hot for his handling. I do not wonder that any Gentleman should chuse to conceal his Name in this Controversy, as it stands at present, rather than expose himself to the Outrages of a petulant Writer, who knows not how to contain himself within any bounds of Decency. It is needless to exemplify in what sort he has used the Bishops of the Church, and especially the Bishop of St. David's, in this his last Book; for which the best Excuse he has to offer is this, that \* if a Lord will engage with a Plowman, and should meet with a Kick on the Shins, he should know how to bear it with patience. If Mr. W. is willing to have it said that he has the Wit and the Manners of a Plowman; I shall readily acknowledge the Comparison to be very just. As to the Bishop, he, I dare say, knows how to bear the Treatment he has met with from Mr. W. with patience; and so much the rather when he observes, that even MAJESTY ITSELF has not been suffered to escape the Scourges of his insolent Pen.

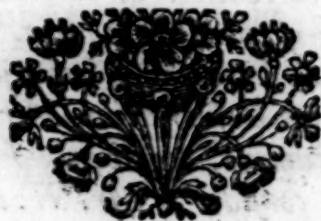
I could readily have join'd with Mr. W. in his Request to the excellent Author of the Tryal of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of JESUS, "that he would publish, what in the Conclusion he has given us some hopes of, The Tryal of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of LAZARUS †:" But till that comes, if ever it is to come, I hope this Essay will be accepted, in which I have joined that Case, and the other two Resurrection-Miracles recorded in the New Testament, together. I have all along, in this Work, consider'd Mr. W. as an Infidel, by

\* P. 68.

† P. 61.

which I am sensible I have drawn upon myself a Charge of Slander; for this is the great and only Fault of all his Adversarys, which has occasioned so much Complaint on his side, that they will not allow him to be a Christian. But if Mr. W. will be angry, I cannot help it: for surely great is his Madness or his Confidence in pretending to be a Christian, when he saps the very Foundation, without which it will be impossible ever to shew, that Jesus was a Prophet sent from God. If Mr. W. is of another Opinion, it would be a great Satisfaction to the Publick to see a Specimen from him, shewing how an Infidel may be converted upon his Principles.

As to the Matter of this Book, I have confined myself wholly to the clearing up the Scripture-History, leaving that part of the Dispute which concerns the Sense of the Fathers, to others who have more time to spare. Why I set not my Name to this Treatise, Mr. W. has no right to demand an account. I have made use of my Liberty, and let him make use of his. If he gives no Answer, I shall think the Gospel thus far justified. If otherwise, whether he sets himself to reason or to rail, to laugh or to be serious; my business shall be, as he advises, to take all with patience, and, stripping him of every false Ornament that may help to disguise the Truth, and lead the Reader off from the Point in question, to set him forth naked to the World.



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# A DEFENCE

OF THE

SCRIPTURE-HISTORY, &c.

**M**Y Purpose is to consider those three Miracles of our Saviour which Mr. *Woolston* has thrown together in his fifth Discourse, viz. The Resurrection of *Lazarus*, of *Jairus's* Daughter and the *Widow of Nain's* Son; in which that we may proceed in some Method, there are two Things principally to be attended to as general Heads comprehending, I think, all his Objections, viz.

*First*, What Appearance these Facts have upon the Face of the Scripture-History.

*Secondly*, What is the Evidence upon which we believe the Scripture-History to be true,

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and



and what are the Exceptions which this Writer has produced against it.

*First* then; let us consider what Appearance these Facts have upon the Face of the Scripture-History; and particularly, *whether in the Account of these Facts, as they stand recorded by the Evangelists, there appears any such Improbability, Incredibility, or Absurdity as may justly render them Suspicious?* Our Author is very copious in declaiming upon this Head, insomuch that were any one disposed to frame an Idea of the New Testament from his general Representations of it, he must conclude it to be one continu'd Chain of Inconsistencies. What Ground there is for all this Outcry will soon appear, when the Particulars of the Charge come to be laid before you. In order to it, take the History of these three Cases in short as follow.

“ *Jairus* a Man of Note among the Jews  
 “ having heard of the Fame of *Jesus* as  
 “ Worker of Miracles, comes to him, and  
 “ with great Earnestness desires him to go and  
 “ heal his Daughter, who was at the point of  
 “ Death. Soon after, there comes a Messenger  
 “ acquainting him that she was actually dead  
 “ *Jesus* nevertheless goes to the Ruler's House  
 “ where he finds the *Minstrels*, and the whole  
 “ Family making great Lamentation. Here  
 “ upon taking with him *Peter*, and *James*, and  
 “ *John*, and the Father and Mother of the  
 “ Damsel, he enters the Room where she was

“ laid in. And

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“ laid, and taking her by the Hand said,  
 “ *Damsel arise*; and she arose and walked.

“ *Matt. ix. 18. Mark. v. 22. Luke viii. 41.*

“ The *second* History acquaints us that *Jesus*  
 “ going to a City called *Nain*, attended with  
 “ his Disciples and much People; he met at  
 “ the Gate of the City, a young Man (the  
 “ only Son of a Widow Woman) a carrying  
 “ to his Grave. Moved with Compassion he  
 “ came and touched the Bier, and said *Young*  
 “ *Man arise*. And he that was dead sat up  
 “ and began to speak, and he delivered him  
 “ to his Mother. *Luke vii. 11.*

“ The *third* and last is to this effect. *Lazarus*  
 of *Bethany*, the Friend of *Jesus*, was  
 sick; of which he is presently acquainted by  
*Mary* and *Martha* the Sisters of *Lazarus*.  
 After two Days he prepares to go and visit  
 him, and by the way tells his Disciples plain-  
 ly that *Lazarus* was dead, signifying to them  
 his Intentions of raising him from the dead.  
 When they came to *Bethany*, they found  
 that he had been four Days laid in the Grave.  
 Whereupon *Jesus* attended with his Disci-  
 ples, and *Mary* and *Martha*, and many o-  
 ther *Jews*, goes to the Grave, and having or-  
 der'd the Stone to be taken away, cried with  
 a loud Voice, *Lazarus come forth*. And he  
 that was dead came forth with Grave Clothes,  
 and his Face was bound about with a Nap-  
 kin. And *Jesus* saith unto them—Loose him  
 and let him go. *Job. xi. 1—47.*

I think I have omitted no one material Point in writing these Stories; which at first View seem to be very plain, consistent Narratives, containing nothing of Absurdity or Incredibility, unless any one thinks it to be an incredible thing that God should be able to raise a dead Man to life. But let us hear what this Writer has to except against them. His Objections, (such of them, I mean, as properly fall under the present Enquiry) are in number five; whereof three have a general and common Reference to all the Cases above mentioned; and two are peculiar to the Case of *Lazarus*.

The Objections common to all the Cases are these viz. \* 1. That none of these three Persons said to be raised from the dead, were at all proper Persons for Jesus to work such a Miracle upon in Testimony of his divine Power. *Jairus's* Daughter, it seems, was an insignificant Girl. The *Widow's* Son a Youth of no greater Importance. *Lazarus*, something more considerable as he was Jesus's Friend; but not so proper a Subject by a great deal as *John* the Baptist or many other Persons, whom this Writer if he had been advised with, could have recommended for this purpose. 2. That neither sacred nor ecclesiastical History † make any mention what became of these three Persons after their Resurrection; how long they lived; or of what

\* P. 20, to 27.

† P. 15, to 20.

*Use and Advantage their restored Lives were to the Church, or to Mankind.* 3. That \* *none of these three Persons did or could after the Return of their Souls to their Bodies tell any Tales of their separate Existence.* If this Writer had not been under very strong Inclinations to depreciate the holy Scriptures, he would never have imagined that a Charge of Absurdity could be supported by such wretched Cavils as these. He very rightly observes, that the End our Saviour proposed in working these Miracles, was to give *Testimony of his divine Power.* I desire then that it may be explained why the raising of these Persons from the dead, was not as good an Evidence of the Power of God, as the raising of any other Persons would have been? Or of what Consequence it is to the setting forth our Saviour's divine Power, to be told, how it fared with these Persons when they were dead; where they dwelt; and what they did after they were again restored to Life? That *Jesus ought to have raised all that died wherever he came,* our Writer owns *cannot be supposed.* *Two or three Instances,* says he, *will be allowed to be sufficient.* Here are now three for his purpose; yet they will not satisfy: And why? why because *Jesus* did not think fit to raise just such Persons as he would have him to have raised; *an useful Magistrate,* for instance; or



*an industrious Merchant ; or a Father of a numerous Family ; or some other Person of consequence to the Commonwealth.* How does the Gentleman know of what consequence these Persons were, or were not, to the Commonwealth? Or what has the Commonwealth to do in such Questions as these? Insignificant as these Persons were upon other accounts, they are Instances, I say, of the Power of God ; and how wise soever this Writer may imagine himself to be, we have certainly a right to suppose that God is wiser, and that it belonged to him, and not to any Mortal upon Earth, to determine upon whom it was proper to exercise this Power, so as best to answer the Ends of his Providence. Nor let him be disturbed as if it were an Absurdity, that a Person should be raised from the dead and make no Discoveries *to his Friends and Acquaintance* about the other World. For aught that he can shew to the contrary, these Persons did tell their Friends and Acquaintance all that they knew of it themselves. But if (which is most likely) they themselves knew nothing, it is very certain that they could tell nothing. The Notion of Death implies no more than the Separation of Soul and Body: And by the Will of God, the Soul may subsist for a time, in a state of Insensibility out of the Body, as well as it may in the Body. But how, (he will ask) can it reasonably be supposed to have been the Will of God, that these Persons should know



know nothing of a separate State? Would not *a Report* of the Condition of departed Souls, from those, who for a time had had the Experience of it, *have been a Confirmation of that Doctrine, which is of the Essence of our Religion, and an absolute Confutation of the Sadduces and Sceptists of that Age, and of the Materialists in this?* I much doubt, whether it would or not. For it is a very hard matter to know what will *absolutely confute* (in their own Opinions, I mean) those who are aforehand determined not to believe. In my Apprehension, the Evidence of a future State upon the foot it now stands, is as good as it needs to be; and I am not sure whether if *Lazarus* had known, and *St. John* had particularly related, as from him, what was the State of the Dead; I am not sure, I say, that this Writer himself would have believed it one jot the sooner. But it is not worth while to dispute this Point with him. Let the Advantage of the Evidence for a future State be as great upon this Supposition as he is pleased to have it: I ask him this plain Question; Can he prove that God was bound to give such Evidence? Or can he even shew, that upon some accounts, it would not have been inconsistent with the Wisdom of his Providence, to have given such Evidence? Till he can do this, he has no right to suppose that these dead Persons knew any thing at all of a separate State, or, if they did know any thing, were permitted to  
 declare

declare any thing. The Silence of the sacred History, as to this matter, is therefore ridiculously alledged as an argument against the Credibility of these Relations. For how absurd is it to bring these Objections against these particular Parts of the Gospel-History, which, if they have any weight at all in them, it must fall directly upon the Gospel itself, whether literally or mystically understood. For since Christ came to teach us all things necessary to Religion, how will you account for his silence in these Points? Was not there more reason to expect a distinct account of the other World from Christ himself, than from the Daughter of *Jairus*, the Son of the *Widow*, or from *Lazarus*?

But the Writer objects farther; Why have we no Accounts, what became of these Persons after they were raised from the Dead? The reason is plain. The Evangelists wrote the History of Christ, and not of these Persons; and therefore they take notice of them as far as Christ was concerned with them, but had no cause to enter into their particular Story. To prove the Miracle, they relate particularly the Circumstances of their Death, and particularly also the Circumstances of their being raised to Life, what more would you have? If you had the minutest Account of their Affairs afterwards, the Miracle would stand as it does, neither diminished nor augmented by the History: And

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is it reasonable to expect from the Evangelists, that they should write every person's Life on whom Christ wrought a Cure? They must, I think, have wrote more Lives than ever *Plutarch* did; and the Gospel intended to instruct the World in Religion, would have made a very odd Figure so filled with private Adventures. As to the Silence of the Ecclesiastical Historians in these Cases, 'tis evident, that they came too late to give us any such Account, since the Gospel had given them no Light, and the Persons were not so considerable as to have particular Historians of their own Time.

Wherefore, to proceed to the other two Objections proper to be spoken to under this Head of Enquiry; which, as I said just now, are peculiar to the Case of *Lazarus*. Our Author has treated this Relation in a very singular manner, and introduces it by a Preface, in which he represents it as \* *such a Contexture of Folly and Fraud, as is not to be equall'd in all Romantick History*. This naturally raises an Expectation of some great Discoveries; and what are they? Why, 1. *Jesus is said to have WEPT and GROANED for the Death of Lazarus, whom he had beforehand determined to raise from the dead!* 2. *Jesus call'd Lazarus forth with a LOUD Voice; as if dead Lazarus had been deafer than Jairus's Daughter, or the Widow's Son!* If these, and such as

\* P. 38.



these be the Absurditys and Incredibilitys the Gentleman talks of, he may with great Ease fill a Volume, but with very little advantage to his Cause. For where is the Absurdity, where is the Incredibility, that even *Jesus* should on this occasion discover in himself the tender, that is the most amiable Part of human Nature ; or that he should speak loud enough to be heard by all the People that stood by, who were to be Witnesses of the Power of his Word in raising the Dead to Life? That which drew Tears from the blessed *Jesus* was not the Death of *Lazarus*, as appears from his own Words to his Disciples : *Lazarus is dead, and I am glad for your sakes*, Joh. xi. 14, 15. And when *Martha* met him, and said, *Lord, if thou hadst been here my Brother had not died* ; he answers without any concern, *Thy Brother shall rise again*, ver. 21, 23. But when he was going to the Grave where his Friend was laid, and saw Sorrow and Distress in the Faces of all around him ; it was then that he first felt those Impressions of Tendernefs, which, without any reproach to us from our Reason, are wont to lead us to sympathize with the Afflicted. And had this Writer been by, to have demanded the reason of his Tears, he might have answered in the Words of a Roman Poet ; *Homo sum, & nihil Humani à me alienum puto*.

It would be no groundless Conjecture if I should say, that one cause of our Saviour's concern

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cern was that slowness of Belief which he observed in those, who had afore been often Witnesses of his Almighty Power ; of which this will not be the single Instance that is to be found in Scripture. The *Jews* openly reviled him, and said, *Could not this Man which opened the Eyes of the Blind, have caused that even this Man should not have died ?* Upon which it presently follows, *Jesus THEREFORE again groaning in himself cometh to the Grave.* And even she who could say with so much assurance, *I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee ;* seems in that Confession to have out-run her real Persuasion. For when *Jesus* said, *Take away the Stone,* she checks him with a Speech full of distrust, *Lord by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days.* But why should I tire you with such common Observations ? What if we cannot tell the reason why *Jesus* wept, nor answer to those who shall ask us, why in the Case of *Lazarus* he spake with a loud Voice ? why in the Case of the Widow's Son he touched the Bier ? why in the Case of *Jairus's* Daughter he took hold of her Hand ? Is it necessary, in order to support the Credit of the History, that we account distinctly for such minute, and perhaps arbitrary Circumstances of our Saviour's Behaviour ? Can even this Writer imagine, that the Truth of the Gospel depends upon the Tone of our Saviour's Voice, whether it was soft or loud ; upon the

Motion of his Hand, whether it was to the right or to the left? or would such Questions as these be borne in any other Case? If all Histories are to be tried by this Rule, they must all be given up as Romances; for all are liable to the like Objections.

From the Account then of these three Facts, as they stand recorded by the Evangelists, there is no appearance of any such Absurdity as this Writer complains of, and which may justly render them suspicious. Another Enquiry proper to be made, is, *Whether in the relation of these Facts there are any Circumstances WANTING, which are necessary to render them full and sufficient Proofs of what they were intended to shew, to wit, our Saviour's Power in raising the Dead to life?* And a very material Defect there is, if what this Writer objects be true; viz. \* *That none of these three raised Persons had been dead LONG ENOUGH to amputate* (as he learnedly expresses himself) *all doubt of Jesus's miraculous Power in their Resurrection.* His Meaning I presume is, that these Persons were not dead long enough in appearance to shew that they were really dead. For admitting that they were really dead, it must be granted that Jesus raised them from the dead; because it is not pretended that these Persons were not alive after they were supposed to have been dead. The only Point therefore to

\* P. 26.



be considered is, what Circumstances there are  
 in the Story to shew that these Persons were  
 really dead? That they were all of them treat-  
 ed by their Friends and Relations as dead Per-  
 sons, is evident and incontestable. For when  
*Jesus* came to *Jairus's* House, he found the  
*Minstrels* there, and the People making great  
 Lamentation. The *Widow's* Son was carrying  
 to his Grave; and *Lazarus* had been actually  
 buried several Days. But the Question still is,  
 whether in these Cases there was not either Mi-  
 stake or Fraud? The Objector puts in for  
 both Pleas as he thinks will best serve his turn;  
 but every one of common Sense must see, that  
 in one and the same Case both Pleas cannot  
 stand together. Let us therefore take them se-  
 parately; and first as to the supposed Mistake;  
 why should any one treat his Child or his Re-  
 lation as a dead Person, unless he knows him to  
 be so? Is there any Sense in believing, that  
 those about *Jairus's* Daughter would have called  
 in the *Minstrels*, and made such ado; or that  
 the *Widow* should have suffered her only Son to  
 be carried forth as a Corpse; or *Martha*, and  
*Mary*, their Brother to be buried, if there had  
 not been in all these Cases all the Evidence of  
 Death that Reason and Sense could give? To  
 what purpose then is it to alledge, that these  
 Persons *were not dead long enough*? If they were  
 dead long enough for the Conviction of the  
 Parents or Friends that they were dead, they  
 were

were dead long enough for the Evidence of the Miracle; and this the Story shews, or it shews nothing. But, because this is a Difficulty at every turn to be thrown in our way, I wish we had been told *how long* it is necessary that a Person should be dead, or seemingly dead, before we may reasonably venture to pronounce him dead. The Objector himself seems to be under some Uncertainty in this matter. In the Case of *Jairus's* Daughter, he says, that *she ought to have been some Days, IF NOT Weeks, dead and buried*. But in the Case of the *Widow's* Son, he is very positive that he *ought to have been buried two or three Weeks*. Why *buried*, I beseech you? Is there no knowing that a Person is dead till he has lain some time in the Earth? Are not the proper Evidences of Death always supposed as antecedent to Burial? And will not a few Hours (or Days at most) determine this Evidence to all reasonable Satisfaction? Why no, says the Objector; for \* *History and common Fame affords Instances of the mistaken Deaths of Persons who sometimes have been unfortunately buried alive; and at other times happily restored to Life*. Allowing him as many Instances of this kind as he can have the conscience to ask, still it must be admitted that there is a common Evidence in this Case which all the World understands, and acts upon without Scruple.

\* P. 28.

ple. Let him answer then to this plain Question ; Would he (such rare Instances notwithstanding) venture to bury his Friend or his Child upon the common Evidences of Death, or would he not ? If he says he would not, somebody I doubt not would have Sense enough to do it for him. But if he says he would, let him tell me why that which is a sufficient Proof that a Man is dead when he is only to be put into the Ground, is not as good a Proof when his death is to be made use of as the Foundation to support a Miracle in his Resurrection ? For my own part, I can see no reason that can be assigned for any difference in these Cases, unless it be said, that we ought to be less afraid of burying Men alive, than of believing the Gospel.

I do not observe, that this Writer has any where suggested a Possibility of Mistake in the Case of *Lazarus*. The Reason is plain : For he, according to the History, having been four Days in the Grave, if there had been any Mistake at first, yet by that time he was certainly dead. But as to the *Widow's Son*, he, we are told, might have been in a *Lethargy* ; and *Jairus's Daughter asleep* or *in a Fit* ; all which is a direct Contradiction to the principal Circumstances of each Story, as I have shewn. Their Friends treated them as dead Persons, which supposes that they had the common Evidence of their being dead ; and this Evidence

as



as fully justified them in admitting the Miracle, as it would have justified them in putting the Bodies into the Grave. But to pleasure the Gentleman, we will admit his Plea for once, and see in what light the Cases will stand. The *young Man*, he says, was in a *Lethargick State*. Be it so; but in all appearance he was so like a dead Man, that all about him concluded him to be dead, and accordingly carried him out in order to burial. How then could *Jesus* (supposing him to have been an Impostor) know, or so much as suspect that he was not dead, but in a Lethargy? Why, says the Objector, (and it is all he had to say) *somebody might inform him*. But how so? The very carrying this Man to his Grave, shews that there was no Suspicion of any such case, and consequently there could be no such Information; much less could any one tell, or *Jesus* know, the exact time when the Man was to awake out of his Lethargy. What then are we to believe in this Case? why, that *Jesus* needlessly offered himself to a publick Tryal, without the least reasonable Prospect of Success. The Company met him accidentally upon the Road; but no body asked him, or challenged him to raise this Man to life. It was his own offer. *Jesus* therefore either supposed the Man to be dead, or he did not. If he supposed him to be dead, (as he had great reason) he must needs know (upon the foot we are now arguing) that it was not in his power

to raise him. If he did not suppose him dead, but hoped that there might be some such Mistake as this Writer talks of, the hazard that he might be disappointed in presuming upon a Case, which scarce happens once in a Century, added to the farther hazard, that if this should be the Case, the Man might not possibly awake upon his touching the Bier, and calling upon him to arise, made the Chance against him to out-run all reckoning. There is therefore no Sense in supposing, either that *Jesus* should have attempted any such thing, or if he had attempted it, that he should have succeeded. It was at least above ten Millions to one that he was defeated.

The Case of *Jairus's* Daughter will have exactly the same appearance. Here *Jesus* was requested by a Person of Note, to go and heal his Daughter then at the Point of Death. Before he could get to the House, a Messenger meets him and acquaints the Father, that she was actually dead. *Jesus* was so far from excusing himself upon this Change in the Case, (as he very easily might) that he offers of his own accord to go forward, and tells the Father, that he would raise her to life: *Be not afraid, only believe, and she shall be made whole*, Luk. viii. 50. It is obvious to remark, that, whatever might be the Case of this Child in reality, *Jesus* had all the reason in the world to believe her to be dead; for the Servant came on purpose

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to make this Report. Here is therefore (supposing him an Impostor) the same Rashness and Presumption as in the other Case. But his Behaviour afterwards (if this Writer's Account of it be true) shews him to have been quite void of Sense. For when he comes to the House, what does he find? why the whole Family in an uproar, and possessed in the strongest manner imaginable, that she was dead; yet, says the Objector, *she was not dead, but asleep*, and *Jesus himself knew it*, and made publick Declaration of it before the whole Company, *the Damself is not dead, but sleepeth*. Surely such a heap of Absurditys was never till now pack'd up together in one short Tale! Here is an Impostor making a bold and a desperate push, which must either ruin him at once, or establish his Reputation for ever. He undertakes to raise a Person to life whom he was assured was dead. If she was dead in good earnest, he was undone. All his Hopes rested upon a bare Possibility that there might be some mistake in the Case. Upon these Hopes he goes; and when he comes there, luckily finds that there was a mistake, and more luckily still, that he himself was the only one who perceived it. What now does he do? Why, instead of improving this extraordinary Accident to his own advantage, he takes away (as much as in him lies) all possible pretence for a Miracle, by declaring plainly, that the Person was not really dead as they

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supposed, but asleep, and wanted only to be awakened! If the Gentleman can in earnest believe that *Jesus* was capable of such Management as this, he must needs acquit him of having any hand in the Plot, which he has been pleased to cut out for him.

But to come to the Truth of the Case: *Jesus* by this Expression certainly meant nothing less than to declare against the Opinion and Knowledge of all the Company, that this Child was not naturally dead. We have the same way of speaking in the Case of *Lazarus*: *This Sickness*, says he, *is not unto death*. And again; *Our Friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep*. And yet, as appears from what follows, *Jesus* was sensible when he said this, that *Lazarus* was dead. A reasonable Man will as little doubt whether he believed that this Child was dead, or not; but the Obstructor's Argument will not permit *him* to say that *Jesus* believed her to be dead. Was he then persuaded that she was *not* dead? Impossible. For as *St. Mark* tells the Story, he had not so much as seen the Child when he said these Words; and whether he had, or had not, it is certain from all the Evangelists, that notwithstanding this Declaration of *Jesus*, the Company still believed her to be dead, and (mistaking the meaning of the Expression) were offended at him: which shews that the Evidences of Death upon her were very plain and strong. So that here

again, as in the foregoing Case, *Jesus* must be supposed to have run the hazard of a publick Defeat, not only without, but against all Probability of saving himself, and yet with the same good fortune as before. For no sooner did he pronounce these Words, *Damsel arise*, than *she arose and walked!* How credible this may appear to some Understandings, I cannot tell; but to me it seems impossible, (excluding all Supposition of Fraud) to give any tolerable Account of the Facts as they here stand related, without supposing in *Jesus* a *Consciousness* of a divine Power which might be observed likewise of many others of our Saviour's Miracles, if it were proper to take notice of them in this place. If this Writer will persist in the contrary, and say, that all this was mere Chance, it will only shew the great Partiality of an unbelieving Spirit; which, considering the Evidences for Religion, takes offence at every thing, but in admitting Objections against it, finds nothing too hard for its Defence.

I come now to the Suggestion of *Fraud*; which in the Objector's own Opinion seems to have no place in the Case of *Jairus's* Daughter; because in remarking upon this Story, he has not thought fit to offer any such Suggestion. But as to that of the *Widow's* Son, he says, that there might be a Trick \* *concerted between Jesus, a sub*

\* P. 28.

*Youth, and his Mother, and others; and all the Formalities of a Death and Burial contrived, that Jesus, whose Fame for a Worker of Miracles was to be raised, might have an opportunity to make a Shew of a grand one.* The same account he gives also of the Case of *Lazarus*, who, says he, \* *might consent to be interred alive in a hollow Cave, where there was only a Stone laid at the mouth of it, as long as a Man could fast, &c.* It will be allowed, I suppose, that these and all such like Suggestions, so far as they are mere Suggestions, unsupported by any Evidence, are of no weight; because otherwise there must be an end of all Historical Truth. The Objector indeed pretends, that † *It is Nonsense and mere Credulity to talk of a real, certain, and stupendous Miracle where there is a Possibility of Fraud:* which is quite absurd. For in all Questions concerning Facts, it is supposed, that the Matter or Thing under consideration might have been, or might not have been; and the determining the Fact this way, or that way, is the proper Use and Design of Evidence. If a Man be accused of robbing upon the Highway, it is supposed possible that he may have robbed, and possible also that he may not have robbed. Which of these two Possibilitys is the real Fact, is the Point in Judgment; and this must be determined by the weight of the Evidence on either side. This Writer says, that

\* P. 29.

† P. 28.



*possibly* there may have been Fraud in these Cases. Very well. We have, I hope, as good a right to say, that *possibly* there may have been *no* Fraud; and if we can bring proper Evidence to shew that there was no Fraud, and he has none to offer against it, to shew that there was Fraud, I suppose it will bear no question which way common Sense must determine.

It must be considered then what this Writer has offered against the Evidence of the Scripture-History, to shew that there was Fraud in these Cases. Now as to the Case of the *Widow's Son*, all that I can find to the purpose, is this, That *the mourning of the Widow — and Jesus's casual meeting of the Corpse upon the Road, looks like Contrivance to put the better face upon the matter*; in which Observation there might have been some Sense, if the Suspicion of Fraud had first been well supported. But to found a Suggestion of Fraud merely upon these Circumstances, is absolutely ridiculous, and shews him to be perfectly careless in what he says. There is no question to be made, but that Sorrow may be counterfeited, and that a Design may sometimes lie concealed under the appearance of Chance and Casualty. But did ever any one say, that a Woman's weeping for the loss of her Son *proves* her to be a Hypocrite? Or that two Persons meeting, as it were by accident upon the Road, is an *Evidence* of a Plot? Fraud there *may* be, I say, under such Circumstances; but then the

Fraud must be made appear not *by* such Circumstances, but by *something else*. The most obvious and natural Construction from these Circumstances, is, that there was no Fraud, as he himself confesses ; for why else does he say that they were contrived *to put the BETTER FACE upon the Matter* ? The truth is, that all Counterfeits endeavour to imitate Nature, and to hide their Cheat under the proper Characters of Truth. But is it reasonable therefore to suspect Fraud in a Case, merely because you observe the common Characters of Truth in it ? Every Coiner puts the King's Face and Inscription upon his false Money. Will you therefore think it reason enough to suspect every Shilling, because it has the King's Face and Inscription ? No ; all that can be said is, that the King's Face and Inscription are no certain Proof that there is no Fraud, where there is reason to suspect one ; but to say that of themselves they naturally import a Fraud, is highly absurd. Let the Gentleman then produce the proper Evidence of a Fraud, and his Plea shall be admitted ; otherwise we shall have a right to consider these Circumstances according to what they naturally import, and to argue from hence, that no Measures were concerted between *Jesus*, the young Man, and his Mother, or any others. If *Jesus's* meeting this Corpse upon the Road was really casual, it is plain, that no Measures could have been concerted. Now thus it is that the History represents

sents it. Upon the face of the History therefore all is right, and no appearance of any Fraud, but quite the contrary.

But for the Case of *Lazarus*, what shall we do? \* *The most notorious Cheat*, says the Objector, *that was ever put upon Mankind!* And † *for the Proof of it*, he says, *we need go no farther than to the Circumstances of its Story, which our Evangelist has related.* I will not ask here what Interest Jesus or any one else could have in contriving such a Cheat: This is a Point to be spoken to hereafter. At present I confine myself to the Circumstances of the Story, as St. *John* has recorded it, which in my Apprehension are so far from having any appearance of Fraud, that they carry with them the strongest Presumptions of Honesty and Plain-dealing, that Circumstances can give. When *Lazarus* fell sick, *Jesus* was not with him, nor did he see any of the Family till he had been buried some days. And when *Martha* and *Mary* met him, their Behaviour was such as might naturally be expected from those, who were under the most sensible concern for the loss of so near a Friend. The Gentleman, no question, will say again, that this was all Grimace, the better to disguise a Design concerted between them some time before, and now to be put in execution. Let him say so if he pleases. He will not pretend, I

\* P. 31.

† P. 43.



hope, that these Circumstances have any Tendency to *shew* that there was any such Design; and therefore (as I said just now) till the Fraud appears, we have reason to consider them as Presumptions at least on our side. What gives some weight to these Circumstances is, that the Disciples of *Jesus*, as their Behaviour shews, were perfectly ignorant of any Design concerted between their Master, and the Family of *Lazarus*. For when *Jesus* first open'd to them his Intention to go and visit *Lazarus*, they opposed it, fearing the Jews. (*ver.* 8.) When he told them that he was asleep, they (mistaking his meaning) conceived Hopes of his recovery. (*ver.* 12.) And when he told them plainly that he was dead, shew great Concern, and cry'd out; *let us go that we may die with him.* (*ver.* 16.) Is this like Men who were privy to a Design of imposing upon the World by a counterfeit Resurrection, just then ripe for execution? The Objector, I conceive, will have little room to say here, that this was Art and Contrivance. For what need was there of disguise in a private Discourse between *Jesus* and his own Disciples? How credible it is now, that *Jesus* should have concealed a Design of this sort (had there been any such) from his Disciples, who (as this Writer is pleased to represent the matter) had so large a share in the grand Cheat of all, his own Resurrection, which was very soon to follow, I leave to any reasonable Person to consider.

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But the great Points are yet behind, which are these, That the Man had been laid in his Grave four days, and that the Miracle of his Resurrection was wrought in the presence of a Multitude of People, Enemies as well as Friends; Circumstances which cut off all pretence of Fraud, as well as of Mistake. You have before heard, that in this Writer's Opinion, *Lazarus* might, for the Propagation of his Master's Fame, consent to be interred alive in a hollow Cave for two Days and three Nights: but how to provide for him so long, so as to prevent a real Tragedy, he seems (as well he might) to have been pretty much at a loss. Sometimes he thinks he might well enough *fast* all that while; at other times he is contriving how to get him some Food. Surely a very needless Care! since it is against all the Knowledge that we have to suppose it possible, that any Person disposed of as *Lazarus* was, should not very quickly be put beyond all Capacity of eating and drinking. Stript naked, swath'd up in Grave-Clothes, put into a Vault under ground, with a Stone laid upon it, intercepting Communication with the external Air, and yet alive and well on the fourth Day! Is this possible? We have no Instance of any thing like it. And fond as this Writer seems to be of his Cause, I am persuaded that he would not for all it is worth, be prevailed upon to submit to have the Experiment made upon himself. If he will, it is soon done; and I may venture to as-

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sure him, that one successful Attempt of this kind would go farther towards destroying the Credit of this Miracle, than all the Objections he can raise from the Circumstances of the Story. But if he thinks that this is hazarding a great deal too much, why should he not believe that *Lazarus* would have thought so too?

But let us suppose this Difficulty got over, and that *Lazarus* was all this while alive; still there is another Point as hard to account for, and that is how the People should be made to believe that he was dead, when the Grave came to be opened, and the Body exposed to publick View. To shew that Craft was used by *Lazarus* to impose upon the Multitude, the Objector lays hold of a very trivial Circumstance, viz. That *his Face was bound about with a Napkin, by which means* (says he) *the Spectators could not discern what was of the Essence of the Miracle, the Change of his Countenance from a dead to a live one.* It is marvellous to see how this Writer can shift and change his Notions to serve his Zeal against the Gospel-History. Now, it seems, the Spectators might have known *Lazarus* to be dead, had they but seen his Face. And yet just now, in the Cases before-mentioned, he supposes that the Friends and Relations of the Dead, who yet certainly saw their Faces, were mistaken, and were carrying their Friends alive to be buried. But to let this pass: He asks, *Why was not the Napkin taken away,* that the People might see



him to be dead? The Answer is ready, because no one did or possibly could think there wanted Evidence of his Death. Juglers may call upon the Company to observe them, and expand their hands before them, and cry, *All is fair*. But it never enters into the Mind of an honest Man, to use such suspicious Caution. Had Christ been conscious that he was going to play a Trick, he might have had such a Thought, as this Gentleman, it seems, would have suggested if he had been by. Or had the People conceived such an Opinion of Christ, as this Writer desires to insinuate, they might have thought of this and many other as curious things. But though many were averse to believe Christ to be the Messias, yet none doubted of the Reality of his Miracles: Even the most malicious supposed them real, though they attributed them to the Power of an evil Being. The true Answer therefore to this Writer is, That there was not, even among the Jews, one Man of his Spirit; not one who thought there wanted Proof of a Man's being dead, when he had been four days buried; not one who thought Christ only a pretended Worker of Miracles: No; long Experience had convinced them, how unwilling soever they were to own him for their Messias, that he was *mighty in Word and Deed*.

After all, I am not certain that the Gentleman is right in his Observation. The Text says, that *Lazarus's Face was bound about with a Nap-*

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\* P.

kin; but it does not say that it was covered with a Napkin, so that the Spectators might not discern his Countenance. At chap. xx. ver. 7. we read Σουδάριον ὃ ἦν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς, *the Napkin that was UPON THE HEAD of Jesus*; by which it should seem that the *Sudarium* was a part of the Burial-dress that was bound about the Head, covering only the upper part of the Face or Forehead like a Night-Cap. And if so, this Circumstance can be no Proof that his Face was not open to the View of the Company, and that the Tokens of Death were not plain and visible. However this was, the Gentleman tells us plainly, that the Spectators (many of them at least) did by some means or other find out that *Lazarus* was alive, when *Jesus* pretended to raise him from the dead. For the Cheat, he says, was detected, and this was the reason why he was prosecuted, condemned, and put to death by the *Jews*. This Observation is to the purpose indeed, if it can be made good; let us see how he supports it.

He observes then from the Evangelist,\* That  
 “ many of the *Jews* who had seen the things that  
 “ *Jesus* did, believed on him, (ver. 45.) that some  
 “ of them who did not believe, went their ways  
 “ to the Pharisees, and told them what things  
 “ *Jesus* had done (ver. 46.) in this pretended Mi-  
 “ racle, and how the Business was transacted.  
 “ Whereupon the Chief Priests and Pharisees

\* P. 41. & seq.

“ were

“ were so incensed, as *from that day forth* they  
 “ took counsel together to put him to death, (ver.  
 “ 53.) and consulted that they might put Lazarus  
 “ also to death, (chap. xii. ver. 10.) Jesus there-  
 “ fore (and his Disciples, and Lazarus, fled for  
 “ it, for they) walked no more openly among the  
 “ Jews, but went thence into a Country near to  
 “ the Wilderness (a convenient hiding-place) and  
 “ there continued with his Disciples, (chap. xi. ver.  
 “ 54.) otherwise in all probability they had been  
 “ all sacrificed.” Upon this general State of the  
 Case he asks two Questions, viz. 1. \* If there  
 “ had been an indisputable Miracle wrought in  
 “ Lazarus’s Resurrection, why were the Chief  
 “ Priests and Pharisees so incensed upon it, as  
 “ to take counsel to put both Jesus and Laza-  
 “ rus to death for it? 2. † Why did Jesus  
 “ and his Disciples, with Lazarus, run away and  
 “ abscond upon it?” To these two Questions  
 he thinks no reasonable Answer can be given;  
 and thence concludes as above, that Jesus was  
 detected in a Fraud, for which he was publick-  
 ly tried and condemned. I am under some hopes  
 that the Answer will not be found so difficult  
 as the Gentleman is willing to suppose; and that  
 these Circumstances fairly considered as they stand  
 in the Gospel, will be so far from shewing that  
 Jesus was detected in a Fraud, that they will rather  
 shew the contrary. The way to set this mat-

† P. 43.

† P. 44.

\* P.



ter in a true light, will be to throw together the chief Passages of the Scripture-History subsequent to this Transaction, in order as they stand ; from whence I conceive, that the true Motives both of our Saviour's Conduct, and of the Behaviour of the *Jews* in reference both to him and *Lazarus*, will be made plain to any common Understanding.

In the first place then, it will be proper to take notice what present effect this Action had upon those who saw it. And as to this we are told, that *many believed on Jesus, but some went their ways to the Pharisees, &c.* By this it is plain, that the greater part of the Spectators not only confessed the Miracle, but were here-upon convinced that *Jesus* was the Christ. For *many* believed, and *some* (that is a few in comparison to those that believed) *went their ways, &c.* probably not above two or three. But few as they were, they were it seems wiser than all the rest, who (says our Writer) \* *were ignorant, credulous, and easily imposed on.* Who doubts it? They were Believers; which is enough it seems to prove them Fools. But, setting this Reason aside, the Gentleman has no more Authority to pronounce them credulous, and easy to be imposed upon, than he has to say the same thing of the Inhabitants of the Moon, with whom he is just as well acquainted as he is with

\* P. 49.

these; only with this difference, that whatever degree of Prejudice the *Jews* had, he well understands it lay not in favour of *Jesus* as the Christ, but against him. But to leave him in possession of his wise Men: When they come to the Chief Priests and Pharisees, what do they tell them? That they had detected *Jesus* in an Imposture? Quite otherwise, as appears from what the Chief Priests and Pharisees said themselves, when, in consequence of this Information, they were assembled in Council. *What do we? for this Man doth many Miracles: If we let him thus alone, all Men will believe on him.* Would the Council have reasoned in this manner if the Purport of the Information had been, that *Jesus* had wrought no Miracle, but had been acting a Cheat, which they had discovered, and were ready to prove against him? Impossible. The Information therefore must have been that *Jesus* had wrought a most surprizing Miracle; and to this the very Passage, upon which this Writer relies, perfectly agrees. *Many* (says the Evangelist) *believed on Jesus, but some went their ways to the Pharisees.* The Antithesis here, supposes indeed, that those *some* that went their ways to the Pharisees *believed not.* But what was it that they did not believe? Why that *Jesus* was the Christ. The Miracle they saw, and could not deny; the Consequence of the Miracle they did not see, or would not acknowledge. There is no difficulty in conceiving this to be

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the Case; Examples of it in Scripture are frequent.

What therefore the Objector lays down as \* *plain from the Story in John*, viz. That *there was a Dispute among the By-standers at Lazarus's Resurrection, whether it was a real Miracle or not*, directly contradicts St. John: for even those who believed not, confessed the Miracle; and it is scarce credible that they should have differed with the rest upon this Point. For had they discovered the Cheat, as is pretended, it is wonderful that they should leave any one of the Company to believe in Christ, when it was in their power upon the very spot to detect the Fraud that was committed. To what purpose was it for them to withdraw suddenly, and go with a Story to the Chief Priests, when they might with much better effect have open'd their Discovery to the rest of the People, and taken every Man there to be a Witness to the Forgery? To go on now with the History. Upon this Information that the Chief Priests and Pharisees had received concerning *Jesus*, they presently determine *to put him and Lazarus to death*. Here the Objector demands a Reason, and asks, *Where was the Provocation?* I hope the Gentleman does not expect that I should give him good Reason, that is, such a Reason as will justify the *Jews* in their Conduct towards *Jesus*.

\* P. 51.

† P. 43.



But the true Reason (if I need tell it him) is this, viz. That the owning *Jesus* to be the Messiah, was giving up at once all those great Expectations which they had founded upon the Scripture-Prophecys; and that Prejudice had the same effect here which it is observed to have in many other Cases, to wit, the hardening Men against the Truth, and enraging them against those who abet and maintain it. This was the reason of their Hatred both to *Jesus* and *Lazarus*, who if they could once be put out of the way, it was hoped, I suppose, that in a little time the Miracle would no more be heard of. The Gentleman pretends, that \* *'tis unnatural to hate a miraculous Healer of Diseases*, and much more so, *to hate a Man for having had a good and wonderful Work done on him*. Very true; if this were all. But it is weak to suggest, that either *Jesus* was hated for doing a good Work, or *Lazarus* for receiving the Benefit of it. For a good Work (say the Jews in a like Case) *we stone thee not, because thou, being a Man, makest thyself God*. Joh. x. 33. And concerning *Lazarus*, it is particularly said, (what indeed is natural enough to be supposed) that the reason why the Chief Priests consulted to put him to death was because they found that through him many of the Jews were *awakened and believed in Jesus*, chap. xii. ver. 11. The Miracles of *Jesus*, as such, did not move the

\* P. 45. 44.

Indignation ; but considered as brought in Evidence to give credit to a Doctrine, to which they had an irreconcilable Aversion. If *Jesus* had taught no Doctrine at all, or no Doctrine contrary to the Opinions commonly received, his healing the Sick, and raising the Dead to life, would questionless have every where gained him very great esteem, and they would very readily have admitted, that the Power by which he was enabled to do such Miracles, was indeed divine. But when the case was so that they could not acknowledge the hand of God in these things without giving up their Religion, though it is certain, that this was no reason why they ought not to have so done, yet it is easy enough to believe, that it might have the effect which we find it had in blinding their Eyes against Conviction, and in putting them upon contriving the Destruction both of *Jesus* himself, and of every one else who was instrumental in supporting his Authority among the People.

The Objector is so well apprized of the greatness of this Miracle, that, supposing it to have been really done, he thinks it was \* *enough to have stopped the Mouths and turned the Hearts of the Jews in spite of all their Prejudices against Jesus*. And he is very positive, that † *if such a Miracle were wrought at this day in confirmation of Christianity, it would bring himself and every*

\* P. 43.

† P. 46.

body else *to a Man, into the belief of it.* I am very much afraid the Gentleman knows not what he says. It is the Nature of this kind of Spirit, to be ever quarrelling with the Evidence we have, and to be crying out for something to supply its Defects, which the Wisdom of God has not thought fit to give us. That the Jews *ought* to have believed upon this Evidence, I agree with him: But if he means to urge their Unbelief as a Proof that such a Miracle was never wrought, (which is the plain Drift of his Argument) he reasons very absurdly: and I think it must be allowed, that he goes beyond all bounds of Discretion when he says, that \* *it was not POSSIBLE for any People to be so bigotted, byassed, and prejudiced, as not to be wrought upon by it.* He himself confesses, that † *Man-kind may be in some Cases very obdurate, and so hard of Belief, as to stand out against Sense, Reason, and Demonstration.* Let him shew then if he can, why the Jews might not possibly do so in the Case before us. What is this, or any other Miracle, more than a Demonstration to Sense and Reason of the Power of God? If then Demonstration as Demonstration may be resisted, why not a Miracle, which is but Demonstration? He observes, that ‖ *such a Miracle—would strike Men with awe and reverence, and none could hate and persecute the Author of*

\* P. 46.

† P. 48.

‖ *Ibid.*



*it, lest he who could raise the dead, should exert his power against themselves, and either wound or smite them dead with it: All which is very right, supposing Men to be first convinced that God is the Author of the Miracle. But the Point between us will still be, whether the Prejudices of many might not hinder them from discerning the hand of God in these things; I say they might, and deny it he cannot, in consequence of his general Principle, that Men may stand out against Demonstration, unless he can shew some reason why this Case should be admitted as an Exception. But what should this Reason be? Demonstration is Demonstration, let it be built upon what it will; and there is not greater difficulty in resisting the Will of God when made known by the Evidence of a Miracle, than when made known by any other Evidence equally convincing. How far violent Prepossessions are capable of imposing upon the Understandings of Men, in judging concerning plain and evident things, nothing but Experience can determine; and we see a variety of Instances of this kind every day, which if we did not see, we should hardly believe. I suppose, that we have not stronger Evidence from the Miracle of *Lazarus's* Resurrection, (admitting it to have been wrought) that *Jesus* was the Christ, than we have from the Principles of common Sense, that Transubstantiation is false. Yet there are Millions that believe this Doctrine, and are ready to cut the*

Throats

Throats of all that deny it. It is absurd therefore to argue against any thing that is credibly related as Fact, from a mere presumption of what Mankind is, or is not capable of doing. For at this rate a hundred things may be proved false, which all the World knows to be true ; and I make no question, but that upon this foot, the Gentleman might make as plausible an Apology for his *Popish*, as his learned Friend the *Rabbi* has made for his *Jewish* Ancestors, and prove that there never was or could be any such thing as a Persecution of harmless innocent Protestants.

Thus much may suffice to have been spoken, in answer to the Objection against the Credibility of this Miracle, drawn from the *Jews'* Treatment of our Saviour. The following part of the Story will lead us to say something concerning our Saviour's Conduct, in consequence of this Treatment : For we are told, that upon this Consultation of the Chief Priests and Pharisees, *Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but went thence unto a Country near to the Wilderness into a City called Ephraim, and there continued with his Disciples.* Joh. xi. 54. The Objector, who is willing to represent our Saviour upon this occasion as a mere Runaway, tells us of his withdrawing into a Country near the Wilderness, as a convenient biding-place ; but willfully omits to take notice, that he took up his abode at *Ephraim* ; the reason of which I presume

sume might be, that if he had mentioned this Circumstance, it might have appeared too plain to his Readers, that though he thought it prudent for the present to shelter himself from the Storm that was gathering, by retiring into a more private Place than *Jerusalem*, or the Parts adjacent; yet he was not afraid to shew his head. But before I come directly to his Objections, give me leave to ask this one short Question; If *Jesus* was a common Cheat, and had been publicly detected as such, upon so remarkable an occasion as this, how was it that he was permitted to retire towards the Wilderness? Why was he not immediately seized upon the Place as soon as the Fraud was discovered, together with *Lazarus*, and all that were concerned as Accomplices with him? The Gentleman himself observes, that if they had not fled, \* *in all probability they had been sacrificed*. Very well. But why, I ask, were they suffered to flee? Were there not hands enough to hold them? † *If a false Prophet at this time a day should counterfeit such a Miracle, and be detected in the Operation*—What then? Why (says he) *the Rage of the Populace would hardly wait the leisure of Justice to dispatch and make terrible Examples of them*. Right again. But did any thing like this happen to *Jesus*? Quite the contrary. Instead of being made a Sacrifice to popular Rage,

\* P. 42.

† P. 47, 48.



both he and his Disciples are suffered to go away quietly, without so much as any attempt to secure and bring them to publick Justice! This shews plainly, that the Enemies of *Jesus* instead of discovering any Fraud, were perfectly confounded, and knew not what to do, till upon Consultation had with the Chief Priests and Pharisees, some measures were resolved upon. But to let this pass. *Jesus* knowing that Resolutions were taken to put him to death *retires*, (as was said afore) with his Disciples. *Is not here*, says our Writer, *a plain Sign of Guilt and Fraud*\*? I hope not! They had indeed *God's Cause and Truth on their side*. But does an honest Cause preclude Men from the common Methods of Prudence to secure themselves from suffering unjustly? In common Cases, I presume, it will be said, No. But the Gentleman farther observes, that they had *the Power of God on their Sides too*; even † that *Power that raised Lazarus from the dead, which was able to have protected them against their Enemies*. No doubt it was able: But what if in the Wisdom of God it did not seem meet to make use of that Power for their Deliverance?

There was a time appointed in the foreknowledge of God, when *Jesus* was to be offered upon the Cross for the Sins of the World. This time was not yet fully accomplished, tho' it was

\* P. 44.

† P. 16.

indeed nigh at hand. But till it should be accomplished he was to be preserved ; How? Plainly not by a miraculous Interposition, but by the ordinary Methods of Providence. For had he summon'd his *Legions* from Heaven, and overthrown his Enemies by a visible exercise of his sovereign Power, *how then* (as he himself observes) *should the Scriptures have been fulfilled that thus it must be?* Mat. xxvi. 54. Who after such a Defeat as this would have dared again to have laid hands on him? The Gentleman perhaps will not like this Account of *Jesus's* Flight: I cannot help it. If he will not allow it to be true, he cannot deny it to be consistent ; and till he is in a fit Temper to receive it, let him run over the remaining part of our Saviour's Life, and see if his Behaviour was such as can with any tolerable Appearance of good Sense be supposed of a Man who had been detected as an Impostor, and was fled from the hand of Justice. It was not long that he continued at *Ephraim*, and what is very remarkable, the next News we hear of him was at *Bethany*, in the House of *Lazarus*, where he was entertain'd at *Supper*, publicly, in the presence of *great numbers of the Jews*, who came, not only for *Jesus* sake, but that they might see *Lazarus* also, whom he had raised from the dead. Joh. xii. 1 — 10. *Bethany* was a Village about two Miles distant from *Jerusalem* (Joh. xi. 18.) where, within six days, the Passover was to be celebrated (Joh. xii. 1.) Here our Saviour, whose design was

to be at the Feast) took up his Quarters, and during this short Interval went dayly to *Jerusalem*, where he appeared in the most publick and frequented Places. The first time of his going thither he was met upon the way by great Throngs of People, who with loud Acclamations, and other publick Marks of Honour, usher'd him into the City, (*vers. 12.*) After this we find him in the Temple, driving out the Buyers and Sellers, (*Mat. xxi. 12.*) disputing with the Scribes and Pharisees; rebuking them sharply with biting Parables; and exposing them openly in his Discourses to the People, as blind, wicked, and hypocritical. (*Vers. 23. to the end, and Chap. xxii. xxiii. throughout.*) Let me stop here then, and ask a few Questions. What was it that brought *Jesus* from *Ephraim*, whither he had retir'd for Security? Was he pursued? Was he driven from thence? No; it was his own Choice. But would he have come away so quickly? Would he have come again to *Bethany*, the very Place where the Fraud had so lately been discover'd, and to the House of the very Man who was the principal Actor with him in the Cheat? Would he have gone to *Jerusalem*, into the very teeth of his Enemies? Or would they from whom but a little while before he made his Escape for fear of being sacrificed, have received him immediately with such Marks of Distinction? There is no Degree of Credibility in these Suppositions; nor is any tolerable Account to be given



ven of the Facts as related on either side, without admitting in our Saviour a Consciousness of his own Innocency of any just Imputation of Fraud, and on the part of the People a general Persuasion that he wrought these Miracles by the Power of God. The Freedom of Speech which our Saviour used, in reproving the great and leading Men among them, had been downright Madness in him, if he had known himself obnoxious. But it is worth our notice, that in all the Disputes that *Jesus* had at this time with the chief Priests and others, who us'd all the Artifice possible to *entangle him in his Talk*, and to catch something from him, which might furnish them with just Matter of Accusation ; there is not the least Hint or Intimation of any Fraud committed, or suspected to have been committed in the Case of *Lazarus*, which (considering the great weight of the Objection, supposing it to have been true ; the short Time that had passed since the thing was done ; and that several were there present, who must have been Witnesses of the Fraud) that somebody or other should not have taken notice of, to disgrace him with the People, it is to me utterly incredible. But contrary to this *St. John* expressly says (Chap. xii. ver. 17.) that *the People that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his Grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record to Jesus ; intimating withal, that the Fame of this Miracle occasion'd a greater Concourse than ordinary at Jerusalem at that time.* For thus

it follows (*vers.* 18.) *For this cause the People also met him, for that they heard that he had done this Miracle.* A clear Demonstration that there was no detection of Fraud in the Case of *Lazarus*, but that the Fact was as the Evangelist has represented it.

I might further add, that at *Jesus's* Tryal before *Pontius Pilate*, there is not a Word about any Fraud in the Case of *Lazarus*: that *Lazarus* himself was never called to account for his Part in the Cheat; and that the Supposition of a Cheat detected in the Case of *Lazarus*, makes the Caution of the *Jews*, to prevent the like Fraud in *Jesus's* own Resurrection absurd and unaccountable. But these things have \* already been set in a proper Light. And therefore to conclude this Point: You have seen how these Cases stand upon the face of the Scripture-History, and it appears,

1. That taking them as they are recorded by the Evangelists, they are clear of all such Absurdities and Inconsistencies as may justly render them suspicious.
2. That in the Relation of these Facts, there are no Circumstances wanting, which are necessary to make them full and sufficient Proofs of what they were intended to shew, to wit, our Saviour's Power in raising the dead to Life; under which Head I have clear'd them likewise from all Imputation of Mistake or Fraud. But it will be said, 'tis likely, that Circumstances

\* *Trial of the Witnesses*, p. 38, 39.

ces may be invented as well as Facts ; and that the Apostles, if they had any Design of imposing upon the World, by a relation of counterfeit Miracles, might have Discretion enough, by suppressing some Particulars which were true, and reporting others which were not true, to give the whole an Air of Credibility. It may now therefore be proper to consider,

Secondly, What is the Evidence upon which we believe these Facts to have been justly and faithfully represented, and what Exceptions this Writer has produced to weigh against that Evidence.

That the Books of the New Testament are the genuine Writings of the Persons whose Names they bear, the Gentleman denies not. That there was such a Person as *Jesus Christ*, and that these Writers had that relation to him, as Disciples and Followers, which they pretend to have had, he all along admits, and takes for granted. Whether therefore the Evangelists were qualified or not qualified to give us a true Account of what *Jesus* did, if they were minded so to do, can be no part of the Question between us ; for they speak of such things, as, if they were done at all, were done in their own Times, whereof themselves (as the constant Attendants of *Jesus*, during the Time of his Ministry) must have been Eye-Witnesses, or have received immediately from those who were so. The only Point in dispute then must be, whether the Evangelists are Persons to  
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be depended upon or not ; and concerning this it is sufficient to say that they have given the strongest Evidence of their Integrity that it is in the power of Man to give : I mean in their maintaining these Truths, under the most absolute Renunciation and Defiance of the World, and, at last, sealing them with the Testimony of their Blood. The Objector laments it as \* *a sad Misfortune that attends our Inquiry after Truth in these Matters, that there are no other Memorials extant of the Life and Miracles of Jesus than what are written by his own Disciples*. As if the Evangelists were therefore not to be credited because they were the Disciples of Christ. But this must needs be a weak Pretence, because it is not reasonable to expect that the Enemies of *Jesus* should have left any Memorials of him as a Worker of Miracles. The *Jews*, you see, took all the pains they could that they might be no more heard of ; and it is natural enough to believe, that all the World besides, who would not be convinced by his Miracles, should do the like as well as they. So that if a History of the Life and Miracles of *Jesus* is not to be expected from his Enemies, nor admitted from his Friends, the Consequence must be, that tho' *Jesus* did work these Miracles, and give the proper Evidences of his working them, to those who were themselves Witnesses of what he did ; yet there was no such thing as recording or

\* P. 50.

reporting these Miracles, in such a sort as to make it reasonable for any body else to believe them ; which, I think, is by much too great an Absurdity to stand with common Sense. But why are the Disciples of *Jesus* not to be credited, in reporting the Actions of their own Master ? Supposing them to be Men of Integrity, the Circumstance of their being Disciples, is so far from making their Evidence the worse, that it makes it the better : For who were so likely to know what *Jesus* did, as they who constantly attended him during his Ministry ? Now this I say, that if the Apostles have not given full and sufficient Proof of their Integrity, there is no possibility that any Man upon Earth should give sufficient Proof of his Integrity ; because in the Reason and Nature of Things, there can be no stronger Evidence of a Man's Integrity, than his laying down his Life in Confirmation of what he says. The Apostles were *Jesus's* Friends. You say right. But what did they get by being his Friends ? *Houses, or Lands, or Friends*, or any thing else that could make it worth their while to tell Lyes for him ? If this had been the Case the Objection would have some sense in it : But since they were told aforehand, by their Master himself, and afterwards found it true by their own Experience, that the Consequence of their being his Friends, would be their being at enmity with all the World besides, and that it was impossible that they should appear as Maintainers

of

of his Doctrines, or as Witnesses of his Works; without giving up the Life that now is for the sake of another to come; it is evident beyond exception, that supposing them to have had the common Passions and Sentiments of Men, and not to have been quite beside themselves, their Steadiness in asserting these things to the last, can be resolved into nothing else, than the Power and Conviction of Truth upon their Minds. You might say (if you could shew any good Reason for saying so) that the Apostles were Fools or Madmen, for believing that *Jesus* Christ wrought these Miracles. But to pretend, that notwithstanding they have asserted, that *Jesus* wrought these Miracles, yet that they themselves did not believe that he wrought them, after such Evidence of their being superior to every Consideration that might tempt them to falsify, is absurd, and contradicts all the Notions and Experience we have of Mankind.

The Gentleman, in answer to this common and general Argument, somewhere observes coldly, that \* *many Cheats and Criminals have asserted their Innocency in the utmost Extremity of Death*; which, how little it is to the purpose, has already been shewn in a † Treatise before mentioned, to which I refer the Reader. Thus much I think is the least that any Man of Sense and

\* *Sixth Discourse*, p. 27.

† *Trial of the Witnesses*, p. 103.



Reason can say, That if the Evangelists have not given absolute and incontestable Proof of their Integrity, they have given very great Proof of it: And that this Proof, whatever it is, ought to be admitted as sufficient, till some Considerations of greater, or at least equal, weight be offered to ballance on the other side. What then has this Writer to say against this Evidence? Hitherto we have heard of nothing but Surmises, mere Surmises, such as would not in any ordinary Case be allowed to bear down the Credit of any common Evidence. But there are two Objections which seem in a more direct manner to affect the Credit of the Evangelists as Historians, which I shall briefly reply to, and then thank my Reader for the Patience he has allowed me.

His first Observation is a mere Presumption, which therefore I should not have taken notice of, but that the Gentleman is pleased to say that \* *in the Opinion of the Impartial it makes for his Cause.* It is this; That *not only Time has devoured, but Christians themselves, when they got the Power into their hands, wilfully destroyed many Writings of the Jews, as well as of Celsus and Porphyry, and others which they could not answer; otherwise he doubts not but they would have given us clear Light into the Imposture, of Lazarus's Resurrection.* That many Books antiently written against Christianity, by Jews and others, are now lost, there can be no question. But did the Gentleman ever see

\* *Fifth Discourse, p. 50.*

any of these Books? No, they have been lost long ago. How then does he know that these Books were unanswerable? Or why is he so positive that they *would have given us a clear Light into the Imposture of Lazarus's Resurrection*, or of any other Miracle of *Jesus*, but because, as I have observed before, he finds it an easy matter to believe every vain Surmise, that starts up in his Head to the prejudice of Christianity, and is determined to admit of nothing, how reasonably soever it is offered, that speaks in its favour. If he will take the Character of *Porphry*, (whose Books *Theodosius* the Emperor order'd to be burnt) from *Eusebius* who had seen and read them, he will find in it a very unhappy Description of some Writers of these Times: For he says, he was one \* *who for lack of Reasons to support his Cause, set himself to railing, and that he would sometimes speak Truth, when he could not help it, but never scrupled to tell a Lye, when he thought he could palm it upon his Readers, without being discovered.* I do not expect that the Authority of *Eusebius* should pass with this Writer; nor that he will allow the Reasonings of *Celsus* to have been fairly represented by *Origen*. These were Christians, and therefore not to be believed in their own Cause. But if *Celsus* and *Porphry*, were really such strenuous, unanswerable Advocates of

\* Ἀπορία λόγων ἐπὶ τὸ λοιδόρειν τρέπεται—τὰ μὲν ἐπαληθεύων ἐν οἷς καὶ ἑτέρως αὐτῷ λέγειν ὡς δυνατόν· τὰ δὲ ψευδόμενα ἐν οἷς λήσεσθαι ἐνόμιζε. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 6. Cap. 19.

Heathenism, how came their Friends to suffer their Books to be lost? Time was, when the Heathens had Power enough, and the Christians were harrassed and hunted for in every Corner; their Books demanded to be delivered up, and as often as delivered, destroyed; yet in spite of all this, the Writings of the New Testament (which were all of them extant above two hundred Years before the Empire became Christian) stood their ground, and by the good Providence of God remain unto this day. But no sooner (says our Writer) is the same Power in the hands of Christians, but away fly the Books of Infidels as in a Whirlwind. How so? one may reasonably ask. Were not the Heathens, when under the Power of the Christians, as able to preserve their Books from being destroyed, as the Christians, when under the Power of the Heathens, were to preserve theirs? No doubt but they were, if mere Power were the only thing to be considered. But there was this remarkable Difference in the Case, which is the only thing that can give an adequate Account of the different Fate of these Writings. The Books of the New Testament were so confirmed and established by undoubted Evidence, and Christians were so fully convinced of their divine Authority, that they willingly sacrificed their Lives, rather than deliver up their Books; and by this means they were preserved, and outlived the Rage of ten Persecutions. The Writings of *Celsus* and *Porphyry* were (like those



which this Gentleman's Friend the *Rabbi* furnishes him with at every turn) senseless, lying *Invectives*, with which, tho' perhaps many were pleas'd, yet no one had that value for them, as to run any hazard to preserve them, and therefore they easily fell under the Punishment which many thought due to the Spite and Malice which gave them birth. I commend not their Zeal: I wish the Books were now extant, and am persuaded that this Gentleman and his Friends would boast less of them, if they had them, than they do now they want them. For were they extant, what more could they signify than this Gentleman's Discourses? So far as mere Reasoning is concerned, he would be offended perhaps if we should suspect that he wanted any help from these Fathers of Infidelity, to find out *Absurditys*, *Inconsistencys* and *Incredibilitys* in the Letter of the Scriptures. And as to the Matter of Fact, let *Celsus* or *Porphry*, or any other, be supposed to say, with as much Assurance as *he* does, that *Jesus* was an Impostor, and that the History of his Miracles, as given us by the Evangelists, is a mere Fable: The Question, after all, will be, Whom are we to believe? That they, or any Authorities they could bring to vouch for them, could have better Opportunities of knowing the Truth, than the Evangelists had, is absolutely impossible; and that any of them have given any such Proofs of their Honesty and Sincerity, as the Evangelists did, a Man must have no Sense of Shame that can maintain.

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The next, and only remaining Objection, is drawn from \* *the unnatural and preposterous Order of Time* (as he is pleas'd to express himself) in which these three Miracles are related, which (says he) justly brings them all under Suspicion of Fable and Forgery. The Gentleman makes great to do with this Observation. I shall represent the full Strength of it in a very few Words.

The Case then is this. These three are all the Instances we have upon Record of *Jesus's* Power, in raising the Dead to Life, his own Resurrection excepted; and all of them are not recorded by each of the Evangelists. The History of *Jairus's* Daughter is mention'd by three of them, viz. *Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. That of the Widow's Son, is related by *St. Luke* alone. And that of *Lazarus* only by *St. John*, who has omitted to speak of the other two. This is matter of Fact. From hence the Objector argues, that it is very unlikely that these Stories should be any of them true. For, says he, "These three Miracles are not equally great, but differ in degree. The greatest is that of *Lazarus*. Next to it is that of the *Widow's* Son. And least of all, that of *Jairus's* Daughter. What then could be the Reason that *Matthew, Mark,* and *Luke*, who all wrote their Gospels before *John*, should omit to record this remarkable, and most illustrious Miracle of *Lazarus*? And why too did not *Matthew* and *Mark* mention

\* P. 6.

“ the Story of the *Widow of Naim's Son*? To  
 “ aggrandize the Fame of their Master for a Wor-  
 “ ker of Miracles, was the Design of all the E-  
 “ vangelists; and if it was not necessary that all  
 “ of them should set down every Miracle of this  
 “ kind, still it is absurd and unnatural to suppose  
 “ that any of them (especially the first Writers)  
 “ should omit the greatest of all, which would  
 “ have done him most credit, and take notice  
 “ only of the least. If *Matthew* had recorded  
 “ only the Story of *Lazarus*, *Luke* had added  
 “ that of the *Widow's Son*; and *John* lastly had  
 “ remembred us of *Jairus's Daughter*, which the  
 “ other Evangelists, studying Brevity, had o-  
 “ mitted, then all had been well, and no Ob-  
 “ jection had hence lain against the Authority of  
 “ the Evangelists. But as the Case now stands,  
 “ it looks as if there were three Romantick Wri-  
 “ ters, who strove to outstretch one another in  
 “ their several Stories. The first was sparing and  
 “ modest in his Romance. The second, being  
 “ sensible of the Insufficiency of the former's  
 “ Tale, devises a Miracle of a bigger size; which  
 “ still not proving sufficient to the End proposed,  
 “ the third Writer, rather than his Prophet's  
 “ Honour should sink for want of a Resurrection  
 “ Miracle, forges a monstrously huge one; against  
 “ which it will be always Objection enough,  
 “ that it was not related by the first Histo-  
 “ rian, nor invented by the last, till he was a-  
 “ bove a hundred Years old, in his dotage, and  
 “ every



“every body dead that should have confuted  
“him.”

Thus stands the Objection ; upon which I cannot help making one general Remark, *viz.* That there is a great deal too much in it to be true. Here is a Design of imposing upon Mankind, by a fabulous History of sham Miracles, to aggrandise the Fame of a pretended Prophet, father'd upon the Evangelists. This Design is represented as, within some few Years after its first broaching, (like a weak and crazy Building) always tottering, and ready to fall, and wanting at every turn to be propt up by some new Forgery. The Histories of St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark*, are supposed, in vertue of one, and that a small Resurrection Miracle, to have been the first Support to the Prophet's declining Honour. But this proving too weak to sustain the encreasing Weight, out comes St. *Luke*, some Years after, with a new one, and a bigger ; and St. *John*, for the like Reason, with another bigger than that, at some greater distance of Time. I will venture to say, that there never was any State of the Christian Church that will agree with this Representation, nor is there indeed any thing so void of Probability. The Gospel, from its first Promulgation, was every day gaining ground, so that there was no occasion, in order to support its sinking Credit, to have recourse to new Forgeries. Nor if there had been occasion, could the Project have possibly succeeded, since whatever

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discredited any old Forgery, must much more have discredited any new one, against which the very Novelty of it would have been an unanswerable Objection. But not to pursue this Writer in his peculiar way of arguing upon the Case (which would be an endless Task) I will apply myself directly to the single Point, which comprehends the whole Difficulty; namely, If these two Miracles were really wrought, how came it to pass, that neither St. *Matthew*, nor St. *Mark* took any notice of them? That they should be ignorant, or have forgot that they were wrought, is incredible; and that they should knowingly have omitted them may seem very strange, considering how many Miracles they have both of them set down, which are less remarkable, than these. This is all that we have to answer for, and if we can answer satisfactorily, the whole Objection must fall of course. There can be no occasion to consider both Cases distinctly. What serves for one will also serve for the other. Taking therefore the Case of *Lazarus*, which may seem liable to most Exception, I shall endeavour to shew, that the Silence of the preceding Evangelists is no sort of Proof, that this Story was forged by St. *John*.

The Gentleman lays it down as the Principle upon which he builds, That \* *the Design of all the Evangelists was to aggrandize their Master's Fame as a Worker of Miracles*; which, abating

\* P. 7.

something for the Indecency of the Expression, is very true. The Evangelists recorded the Miracles of *Jesus Christ* for the same Reason for which he wrought them ; which was to shew, that he was a Prophet sent from God. But through Vanity and Ostentation they recorded nothing ; and therefore instead of setting down all the Miracles which our Saviour wrought, (which, as St. *John* intimates, was scarce practicable) they content themselves each of them to mention so many as seemed to be sufficient. Thus far, I think, there is no harm ; for the Gentleman does not pretend to say, that it was necessary that ALL the Miracles wrought by our Saviour should have been recorded by each particular Evangelist ; on the contrary he confesses, as to that particular kind of Miracle now under Consideration, (to wit, the raising the Dead to life) that *† one Instance was enough*. But, says he, *which should they* (St. Matthew and St. Mark) *as wise and considerate Historians, have made choice of, the greatest or the least Miracle ? The greatest, to be sure, and that was that of Lazarus, or of the Widow's Son, if they knew of either. But instead of these they tell us the Story of Jairus's Daughter, that is, of an imperfect and disputable Miracle in comparison of the other two, which consequently they knew nothing at all of, or they would have preferred the Report of them.*

† P. 9.



To confine myself, as I said before, to the Case of *Lazarus*, and to give the Gentleman some relief under *his* Difficulty, (for to say the truth, it is in a great measure a Difficulty of his own making) I desire in the first place, that he would consider what Foundation there is in Reason and Truth, to make that mighty Distinction between these two Miracles, which this Argument supposes. The raising *Jairus's* Daughter, you see, was but a pitiful business in comparison to the Resurrection of *Lazarus*, which was a *huge, most prodigious, most stupendous and superlatively great Miracle*. It concerned him to raise the Miracle of *Lazarus's* Resurrection as much as he could: For the greater the Difference, the better his Argument, which must drop at once if the Difference were little or none at all. Because of two Miracles equal, or next to equal, an Historian may certainly, without any Reflection upon his Judgment, chuse which he will record. Where then I ask is that mighty Difference between these two Miracles? I hope we shall hear no more of *an insignificant Girl of twelve Years old*, nor that it will be expected that I should shew over again, against this Writer, (who is pleased here to call it *an imperfect and disputable Miracle*) that according to all the Circumstances of the Story, the Child was dead and known to be so by all about her. Now if she was really dead, the Miracle in raising her from the dead was just as great as that of raising

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sing *Lazarus*; for between *dead*, and *dead*, there is no difference. But *Lazarus*, you will say, had been buried four days. What then? He could be *but dead*, if he had been buried fifty. The utmost that you can make of this Circumstance is, that there was greater Evidence that *Lazarus* was dead, than there was that *Jairus's* Daughter was dead, and even this is not certain. That *Jairus's* Daughter was not dead so long as *Lazarus*, is very sure, but how long she was dead, the Story does not say; and it is evident from Experience, that there are some Tokens which will as infallibly prove a Person to be dead from the time of his expiring, as if he had been in the Grave many days. But be this as it will, the Evangelists that first recorded the Story of this Woman, did not want Evidence that she was dead, nor suspect that any body else wanted it. And therefore this Miracle could not but appear to them as great a Miracle, as the raising a Person from the dead, under any Circumstances could afford.

But let it be supposed, that the Resurrection of *Lazarus* was the greater Miracle of the two; why must the omitting to record this Story be look'd upon as an Instance of so great weakness or carelessness in *St. Matthew*, *St. Mark*, and *St. Luke*, that rather than it should be admitted, *St. John* must presently be given up as guilty of Forgery? *St. John* affirms, that *Jesus* raised *Lazarus* from the dead. The other no where

deny this, only they make no mention of it. Will you now pretend to say, that a mere Negative against the Truth of this Miracle shall avail more than plain and direct Evidence for it? It is absurd to say so; and the Reason why it is absurd is this, That it is infinitely more easy to conceive that those other Evangelists should omit to mention this Miracle, notwithstanding it was the greater of the two, than that St. *John*, who has given such undoubted Proofs of his Integrity, should falsify in this Case. The Reasons which have been offered by *Grotius*, and others, to account for this Omission, our Writer rejects as *weak* and *insufficient*, but scorns to tell us why. His pretence for this is, that \* *it is not worth while to consider them, till somebody shall appear in the Defence of them*, which is something pretty extraordinary. Against whom, or against what should we defend them? These Reasons are what they always were, and if it is none of his business to oppose them, surely it is much less ours to vindicate them. What *Grotius* says is this, That when the three first Evangelists wrote, *Lazarus* was living, and that the inserting his Case into their History, might possibly have brought him under some ill Treatment from the *Jews*. To which Dr. *Whitby* adds, that it might seem less needful to mention a Miracle concerning a Person living so near *Jerusalem*, where there was



so great a Fame thereof, and so many living Witnesses. When the Gentleman has *time enough to spare*, he may shew if he thinks fit, why either, or both of these Conjectures may not be admitted as probable.

He is pleased to alledge in support of his Argument, that \* *the first Writer of the Life of an Hero, to be sure, makes mention of all the grand Occurrences of it, and leaves no room for Biographers afterwards, but to enlarge and paraphrase upon what he has written, with some other Circumstances and Additions of less moment.* In which account the Gentleman seems to have had in view some learned Historian, antient or modern, (who undertakes to treat of things with great Order and Exactness) and to have forgotten that the Question concerns such plain, artless Men as *Matthew, Mark, and Luke.* But the use that he makes of this Observation is not to be endured. *If a third or fourth Biographer after him shall presume to add a more illustrious Transaction of the Hero's Life, it will be rejected as Fable or Romance,* THOUGH FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN THIS, *that the first Writer must have been apprized of it, and would have inserted its Story, if there had been any Truth in it.* I deny it, Sir. No body judges in this manner, except it be in certain Cases, which at present we have nothing to do with. If the first Writer be supposed to report things which happened in his

\* P. 7.

own Times, and the second to have lived at some considerable Distance from him, the Rule will hold. Because in that Case, the first Writer had certainly the best Opportunity of coming at the Truth, and the Fact omitted by him, and reported by the second, may reasonably enough be presumed to have been taken upon slender Authority. It will likewise hold between two contemporary Historians, provided there be any concurrent Proofs which justly render the second Writer suspicious. But do but suppose the Case to happen between two Writers, recording Matters in which they themselves were both personally concerned, and that those Writers have given both of them equal and sufficient Evidence of their Honesty and Integrity, and there is no one of common Sense who will not impute such an Omission to want of Exactness in the first Writer, or to any other Cause, rather than charge the second with Forgery.

One thing should be taken notice of before I dismiss this Subject, which is, that the supposing this Story to be a Forgery of *St. John's*, seems not to be consistent with that Account of it which this Writer elsewhere principally insists upon ; namely, that it was a Cheat contrived between *Jesus* and *Lazarus*, in which *Jesus* was publicly detected, and for which he was arraigned and condemned by the *Jews*. A Forgery is properly a Story of a Man's own Invention, which has no Foundation in Fact. A Cheat is

a real Transaction, deceiving you only in some particular Circumstance. But this is not worth insisting upon: For whether it were a Cheat, or whether it were a Forgery, it will equally affect the Credit of *Jesus* and his Doctrine; but our great Comfort is, that it could be neither, and that for this plain reason, that if *St. John* had either invented a Story which had never been heard of before, or endeavoured to revive an old Cheat publickly detected and exposed, to make it pass upon the World as a real Miracle, no body would have believed him. It is in vain to say, that *St. John* wrote this Story \* *after the Jewish State was dissolved, their Judicial Records destroyed, and every body dead that should confute him.* For if this Story was pure Invention, it would have confuted itself; because if such a thing was really transacted, the Memory of it must have been preserved; and so must the Memory of so remarkable a Cheat so publickly detected. *St. John* wrote his Gospel not above sixty Years after the thing happened, nor much above twenty Years after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; at which time there was probably a great number of Witnesses every where alive (and especially in and about *Jerusalem*) who could remember the whole Affair, and would have been able effectually to have blasted the Credit of the Story, and of the Author both.

\* P. 53.



What has been said is sufficient, I think, to answer this Writer's Cavils, and therefore I take leave of Mr. *Woolston*. But for the Reader's Satisfaction shall add one general Observation upon St. *John's* Gospel, which will help to set this matter in a very clear Light. It was a Tradition in the antient Church, that St. *John* wrote his History at the request of the *Asian* Bishops, to supply the Defects of the former Evangelists. The Authoritys upon which this Account stands may be found in most of the Commentators, and therefore it is not necessary to repeat them here. But the History itself greatly favours this Notion, which whoever will take the pains to compare with those of *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, he will find that it consists almost entirely of such Occurrences as are no where to be found in any of those Evangelists. Not to mention many other Particulars of this sort; the Miracles of our Saviour, recorded by St. *John*, antecedent to his Resurrection, are in all but eight; viz. 1. His turning Water into Wine at the Marriage in *Cana* of *Gallilee*. 2. His telling the *Samaritan* Woman the Secrets of her Life. 3. His healing the Nobleman's Son at *Capernaum*. 4. His curing the lame Man at the Pool of *Bethesda*. 5. His feeding five thousand Men with five Barly Loaves and two Fishes. 6. His walking upon the Water, and calming a Storm at Sea. 7. His giving Sight to a Man born blind, by anointing his Eyes with Clay, and sending him to wash in *Siloam*.

*Siloam.* 8. His raising *Lazarus* from the dead. All which Miracles are omitted by the former Evangelists, except the fifth and the sixth; and these two *St. John* seems to have recorded chiefly to introduce a moral Discourse which our Saviour took occasion to make to the People, whereof the former Evangelists had taken no notice. And therefore the Silence of the former Evangelists is not a stronger Objection against the History of *Lazarus*, than it is against many other Facts recorded by *St. John*, or, to speak more properly, than it is against his whole Gospel. But how it should be an Objection against *St. John*, either in the whole, or in part, it is impossible to understand. For when a Writer professedly undertakes to supply the Defects of former Historians, does not the Undertaking itself imply, that he is to mention many things by them omitted? How else are these Defects supplied? Or how CAN such Defects at any time be supplied, if the very Attempt to supply them is to be look'd upon as a sufficient Reason, why the later Historian shall be charged with Forgery? You may think it perhaps a Disparagement to the three former Evangelists, that their Historys of the Life and Actions of our Saviour, should have any such Imperfection as to make it worth *St. John's* while to write a new one by way of Supplement. But the primitive Christians were of another mind; and it is well worth observing what *Eusebius* says upon this

very Case, which is to this effect; viz. That the Apostles of Christ, though under the Power and Direction of the Spirit of God, were not Masters in all the Nicetys of Language, nor instructed in all the Arts necessary to form complete Historians \*. Their Writings at this day shew as much: For not one of them have given us an exact History of Christ. All of them have omitted many things which the others, one or more of them, have recorded. And even St. John himself confesses, that his own Gospel, though it supplied the Defects of the former Evangelists in many respects, left the History of Jesus still unfinished. For thus he concludes; *And many other Signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his Disciples, which are not written in this Book.* Joh. xx. 30. The reason of all which is to be resolved, as in all likes Cases, into the Judgment and Discretion of these several Historians, who out of that infinite variety of Miracles wrought by our Saviour, chose each of them such as seemed to them to be most material; and if upon the whole, the good Providence of God hath so ordered it, that there

\* Οἱ θεσπέσιοι καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς, θεοπροπέως, ἐμὴ δὲ τὰς τῶν Χριστοῦ Ἀποστόλων — τῇ γῆμιν πρὸς τὸ Σωτήριον αὐτοῖς διδωρμένη θείᾳ καὶ παραδόξοποιᾳ δυνάμει θαυρῶντες, τὸ μὲν ἐν περιόρῳ καὶ τέχνῃ λόγων τὰ τῆ διδασκαλίας μαθήματα πρᾶττεν, ἢ ἥδεσαν ἢ ἐνεχείρουν. τῇ δὲ τῶν θεῶν πνεύματι τὰ σωτηριώδη αὐτοῖς ἀποδείξει — μόνῃ χρώμενοι τῆς τῶν οὐρανῶν βασιλείας τὴν γνῶσιν ἐπὶ πᾶσαν κατὰ γράμματα, τὴν οἰκουμενὴν. σπαρδὴς τῆς περὶ τὸ λογιγραφῶν μικροποιούμενοι θεογνῶσται. Eccl. Histor. Lib. 3. Cap. 24.



is enough recorded to lay the Foundation for a reasonable Faith, we ought to be contented, and should not be so absurd as to throw away what we have, because it is not ALL ; nor busy ourselves in enquiring minutely why this Miracle was recorded rather than another, when there is not so much as one of them that is not wonderful even beyond comparison. To go on with St. *John*.

From what has been said it appears, that the *Asian* Churches were, before the Writing of his Gospel, well assured of the Truth of many remarkable Facts relating to the History of Christ, which were omitted by the other Evangelists, otherwise they could have had no pretence to apply to St. *John* to supply the Defects of those other Evangelists. It appears farther, that the Gospel of St. *John* is an authentic Account of such Facts : For had St. *John* given a History of any other Facts than what were well known to the Church before he wrote them, the Question would have been obvious : How came it to pass that these things were never heard of till now ? which would have been an Objection against his History never to have been gotten over. But if you suppose that what himself was an Eye-witness of, and had been constantly received in the Church of God, as well upon his Testimony, as the Testimony of others ; that, and that only he inserted in his Gospel, as thinking it too material

terial to be left any longer merely to the Conveyance of Tradition : as this implies no greater Deficiency in the former Evangelists than what is consistent with sound Sense, considering the Quality and Condition of those Writers ; so it will alone account for that universal Esteem which this Gospel obtained from the beginning in the Christian World.

## F I N I S.

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